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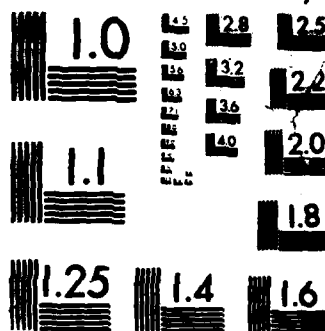
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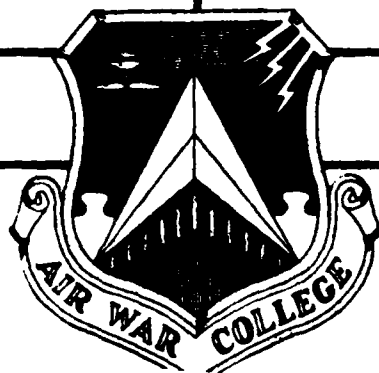
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# AIR WAR COLLEGE

## RESEARCH REPORT

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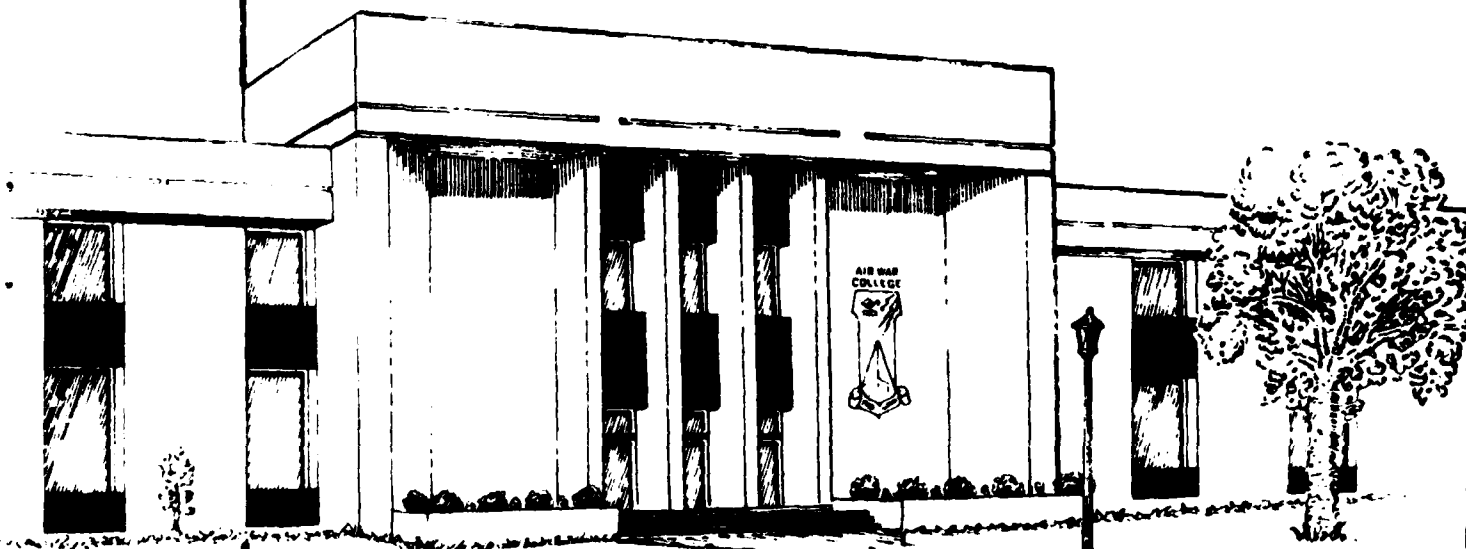
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THEATER STRATEGY TRAINING FOR  
SENIOR LEADERS

By COLONEL JAMES P. KELLY

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AIR WAR COLLEGE  
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THEATER STRATEGY TRAINING FOR SENIOR LEADERS

by

James P. Kelly  
Colonel, USAF

A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY  
IN  
FULFILLMENT OF THE RESEARCH  
REQUIREMENT

Thesis Advisor: Colonel James J. Winters

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

APRIL 1987

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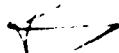


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AIR WAR COLLEGE RESEARCH REPORT ABSTRACT

TITLE: Theater Strategy Training for Senior Leaders

AUTHOR: James P. Kelly, Colonel, USAF

Remarks on the declining combat experience of the active military force introduce a discussion on the importance of capturing the lessons of previous wars in training and education programs for future senior Air Force leaders. A discussion follows comparing Air Force and Army terminology concerning the operational level of war and operational art to set the basis for a look at current training and education programs. The author presents his views on the need for emphasis in training and educating future senior combat leaders for the operational level of war, that area where national strategy is focused into theater and campaign strategy and linked to battlefield tactics. This need for training and education goes beyond the study of history and procedural knowledge into the area of enhancing intuition, instinct and judgment in the face of uncertain knowledge of the enemy. The senior service schools are offered as the forum for developing a foundation for these mental skills. 

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Colonel James P. Kelly (M.A., Webster College) became interested in theater strategy training for future leaders while he was the Director of Operations and then Vice Commander of the 4440th TFTG (Red Flag) at Nellis AFB, NV. His experience with battle management against reactive simulated enemy forces during the large-scale flying exercises led him to conclude that there was a clear need for a serious focus on training in operational strategy for future senior Air Force leaders. Colonel Kelly's experience in tactical operations began with his assignment as an A-1 pilot at Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, Thailand, in 1969. He has had subsequent assignments as an A-7 operations officer and chief of wing standardization and evaluation, air operations inspector on the Ninth Air Force Inspector General Inspection Team and as the Commander of the 356th Tactical Fighter Squadron (A-10) at Myrtle Beach AFB, SC. Colonel Kelly is a graduate of the Marine Corps Command and Staff College and is a graduate of the Air War College, class of 1987.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

As the events of World War II, Korea and Vietnam pass further into history, the U.S. armed forces are faced with a dilemma. The nation is experiencing an unprecedented period of peace between world powers, but, as a result, the number of military members on active duty with combat experience is declining. The question arises: If war were to occur, would our forces be prepared? Would our leaders and future leaders be properly trained and ready to make the decisions necessary to bring about victory in a war of national proportion? This dilemma has gained a lot of attention within the military services. Much is currently being written on this subject and many programs have been implemented to capture the experiences of our combat veterans and to provide realistic training for our warfighters. In this paper I will discuss the subject of peacetime combat training focusing on what I consider to be a strong need for improved training for our future leaders in the area of theater strategy.

To illustrate the problem, consider that the combat background of virtually all the senior military leaders currently on active duty is centered around Vietnam. We have lost from the active duty roles our veterans with experience in war of national proportion, and we are losing

from the retired roles our key leaders from World War II. Taking the United States Air Force as an example, the combat experience in our operational units is rapidly shifting to only the top wing leadership, with many squadron commanders having entered the service too late to have seen combat in Vietnam. We have had quick exposures to military confrontations such as in Grenada and Libya, but we have had little actual experience in major military force employment against a substantial opponent.

I am a strong believer that, as our experience in war wanes, we need to increase our emphasis on training and educating our officers at an earlier level in their careers on the art of warfighting. And not just training for the tactical level, but also to think and train toward that higher level where tactics are brought together to achieve the objectives of military strategy. For it is through an early appreciation for the challenges and requirements at this higher level that these future leaders can build on their everyday training, learn from the current leaders and offer a more complete environment for non-combat-tested leaders to develop their skills.

The realistic combat training programs that are now ongoing in all services would lead one to conclude that our forces are well prepared to employ their weapons. These programs range in spectrum from historical readings to large-scale exercises against a responsive "enemy" such as

the Air Force's Red Flag program or the Army's National Training Center. Much of the focus of this training is at the tactics level. For large-scale joint service exercises where our more senior leaders are trained, the emphasis is on command, control, communications and intelligence (C<sup>3</sup>I). Training for the strategy level and the linking of strategy with tactics against a dynamic enemy does not really begin in the Air Force until a leader is put into a position where he might have to perform this function in war. I submit that this is too late.

Flying exercise programs such as Red and Green Flags at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada and Maple Flag at Canadian Forces Base Cold Lake in Canada provide invaluable training for the individual aircrews. This type of training is oriented toward mission tactics and winning the battle. But the winning of battles does not in itself constitute winning the war. Sun Tzu, the Chinese military writer of the fourth century B.C., put it this way:

For to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.

Thus, what is of supreme importance in war is to attack the enemy's strategy. (1:77)

In his article entitled "The Operational Trilogy," Colonel John Meeham, Director of Theater Operations at the Army War College, asserts that the "key and overwhelming responsibility of the operational-level commander is one of focus...on the strategic objective." He goes on to say

that this was "our great failure in Vietnam. We became so enamored of tactical successes that we failed to recognize that the sum of these tactical successes would not yield the strategic objective we sought." (2:15) What is required is that our leaders operate at that higher level of strategy and connect this strategy to tactics.

Attacking the enemy's strategy thus requires more than the tactics of battles, it requires the strategy of war. It means that not only our forces must be trained and capable, but so must our leaders. The luxury of learning from personal contact with veteran combat leaders is no longer one that we regularly enjoy in our military forces. We are turning to alternative methods to achieve that needed skill our leaders recognize is required of successful warfighting commanders. The reading of military history has become one link to gaining knowledge of the experiences and thought processes of our past combat leaders. But reading history can only provide part of the solution. It can give you a perspective on how and why a previous leader was successful, but it cannot test and develop your individual skill at making decisions in the midst of Clausewitz's "fog and friction of war."

The United States Army in its Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations, has termed this level of warfare that links strategy with tactics the "operational level" of war. The Army defines the skill of working at this level of war

as "operational art."

Operational art is the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals in a theater of war or theater of operations through the design, organization, and conduct of campaigns and major operations.

Operational art...involves fundamental decisions about whether to accept or decline battle. Its essence is the identification of the enemy's center-of-gravity--his source of strength or balance--and the concentration of superior combat power against that point to achieve a decisive success. (3:10)

With this new discovery, or you might say rediscovery, of the need for a major focus of senior combat leaders on the connecting link between the strategy for the war in aggregate and the tactics for the individual engagements has also come a rebirth in ideas on how to train for this level and what the shortfalls of the current training and education programs are in this area.

Air Force Manual (AFM) 1-1, Basic Aerospace Doctrine, addresses the preparation for warfighting as follows:

Challenging professional military education and realistic training facilitate an effective transition from peace to war. The centerpiece of our professional military education programs is the study of the art and science of warfare. The goal of these programs is to influence and help produce a professional force that is prepared to apply theory and knowledge to the task of fighting and winning wars. (4:4-7)

For the military professional, there is no simple formula to learn warfighting. Gaining that knowledge is a continuous process that is the product of institutionalized education and training, experience, and personal effort. Warfighting is a complex, demanding activity that involves the interaction of man, machine, and environment. A study of these factors as separate and isolated elements would be incomplete. Men alone, or machines alone, do not spell success: how men use machines in the combat

environment, and the spirit of leadership that guides that use, spell victory or defeat. (4:2-4)

In further defining the requirements for senior leaders in war, AFM 1-1 states:

...an air commander must continually assess the operational situation and identify where and when both strategic and tactical actions can be used most productively....Accurate assessments allow an air commander to anticipate, initiate, and redirect efforts. (4:2-14)

This last statement is key to understanding the type of training required for future leaders. Developing the ability to "anticipate, initiate, and redirect efforts" requires more than just reading history or participating in C<sup>3</sup>I exercises. It requires training in dynamic and reactive exercises that task the leader to make decisions based on personal judgment of what is to come. It is this visionary area that the Army calls "operational art."

In his article entitled "Training for the Operational Level," Lieutenant Colonel L. D. Holder, one of the principal writers of the Army's current FM 100-5, states:

By installing the operational level of war between strategy and tactics, the Army acknowledged that the planning and conduct of campaigns and the connecting of political goals to military means constitutes an activity different enough from tactics to merit separate study....The middle-grade officers who must perform operational staff duties and grow into positions of senior leadership have studied and practiced tactical operations for their entire careers, but unless they have done it for themselves, they have not learned the skills associated with operational art. (5:7)

In a paper entitled "Learning the Operational Art," Lieutenant Colonel John Turlington, a faculty member at the Army War College, brings to focus the need for future senior leaders to train for the operational art and brings emphasis to those special skills which must be developed.

Operational art...is the skill required to fight at the operational level of war, and it is a skill without which we cannot expect to win. It...requires, in addition to technical competence, a quality of judgment, intuition and instinct that can be developed only through combat experience. We have no way, and we hope never to have a way, to gain such experience through actual combat. Wars are not provided for training and few leaders in war get a second chance. Therefore, if we are to be able to develop leaders skilled in the operational art we must find a way to approximate, as closely as possible, the experience of combat. (6:13)

The difficulty in training for this level is not with doctrine, tactics or equipment, but rather in training one's mind--training your intuition and your instincts.

(6:8) It is here again that we focus on the leader and the contribution his leadership provides in warfighting. FM 100-5 puts it this way:

The most essential element of combat power is competent and confident leadership. Leadership provides purpose, direction, and motivation in combat. (3:13)

The skill and personality of a strong commander represents a significant part of his unit's combat power.

Leaders develop potential combat power in their units through preparation prior to battle. (3:14)

In describing the skills a commander must develop, FM 100-5 goes on to say:

The commander must anticipate the enemy's actions

and reactions and must be able to foresee how operations may develop....Anticipating events and foreseeing the shape of possibilities hours, days, or weeks in the future are two of the most difficult skills to develop, yet among the most important....Anticipation and foresight are critical to turning inside the enemy's decision cycle and maintaining the initiative. (3:23)

It appears, then, that the focus of training for future combat leaders should be in the area of what the Army calls operational art. This is not to exclude the other areas such as doctrine, tactics or equipment, for competence in these areas is required to be successful at the operational level. But training at the operational level needs emphasis as it is most critical to the achievement of the objectives of a warfighting strategy.



## CHAPTER II

### THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL OF WAR

The operational level of war is the focus of much attention within the military and has generated numerous articles, particularly from within the Army. This attention is a direct result of the Army establishing operational art as a function tying strategy to tactics in its FM 100-5. The dividing line between tactics and strategy previously was somewhat difficult to define and this new area of operational art has many writers again in search of clear divisions, now between strategy, operational art and tactics. This is not a new problem. Carl von Clausewitz wrote in the nineteenth century:

The distinction between tactics and strategy is now almost universal and everyone knows fairly well where each particular factor belongs without clearly understanding why....tactics teaches the use of armed forces in the engagement; strategy, the use of engagements for the object of the war. (7:128)

It seems that the distinction was obvious to Clausewitz but not necessarily to others, hence the comment "without clearly understanding why." In Clausewitz's time the division between operational art and strategy was not a major concern--everything above tactics was considered strategy. Clausewitz, however, did understand the problems of the operational level of war as he stated:

In a tactical situation one is able to see at least half the problem with the naked eye, whereas in

strategy everything has to be guessed at and presumed. Conviction is therefore weaker. Consequently most generals, when they ought to act, are paralyzed by unnecessary doubts. (7:178,9)

It is this problem of guessing at the strategy level that operational art focuses on. Strategy, whether at the national level or at that lower level involving the theater of operations and its battles, is based on the intuition of the leader. Inability to act and implement a successful strategy at this level has consequences well beyond the loss of an engagement--it could mean the loss of a national way of life.

Why is operational art surfacing as a problem now? I think you can again trace the reason to the limited combat experience of our current active duty force and a search for a way to insure this is not a weak link in our ability to prosecute a war should we be so involved. Major Robert Kilebrew, U.S. Army, asserts a further problem in his article entitled "Developing Military Strategists:"

Strategy seems so fundamental that there has been an assumption that an officer "grows up" into strategy just as he moves from battalion tactics to corps operations. (8:48)

His concern is that we are not properly preparing our future combat leaders to work at the levels above tactics. We have assumed that these officers will somehow mature from the tactics level to the strategy level like they matured from boyhood to manhood.

It is not an easy problem and it doesn't get solved

by just accumulating years on active duty. In an article entitled "Tactics and the Operational Level of War," Colonel William Bolt, chief of Concepts and Doctrine at the Army War College, and Colonel David Jablonsky, director of Military Strategy at the Army War College, discuss the issue of operational decisionmaking:

The larger perspectives at the operational level of war require more complex and challenging decisionmaking processes than normally occur at the tactical level....decisionmaking at this level is based, to a great extent, on forecasting with an uncertain vision. (9:6)

It is this uncertain vision that keeps reappearing in the many writings as the cause for attention to training and education in the operational art or operational level of war.

The Army's FM 100-5 provides definitions for these different levels of warfare as follows:

Military strategy is the art and science of employing the armed forces of a nation or alliance to secure policy objectives by application or threat of force. Military strategy sets the fundamental conditions of operations in war or to deter war. It establishes goals in theaters of war and theaters of operations. (3:9)

Operational art is the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals in a theater of war or theater of operations through the design, organization, and conduct of campaigns and major operations.... Operational art involves fundamental decisions about when and where to fight and whether to accept or decline battle....Operational art requires broad vision, the ability to anticipate, a careful understanding of the relationship of means to ends, and effective joint and combined cooperation. (3:10)

...tactics is the art by which corps and smaller unit commanders translate potential combat power into victorious battles and engagements. Engagements are

small conflicts between opposed maneuver forces....Battles consist of a series of related engagements. (3:10)

Although operational art gives the Army a term applying to the theater or campaign level of warfare, there still is room for confusion in terms of reference. The Air Force has not incorporated the term "operational art" as yet in AFM 1-1, although the operational level of warfare is addressed. To add further confusion, Colonel John Alger, U.S. Army, in a paper entitled "Thoughts Toward a Definition of Joint Operational Art," observes that:

...the word "operations" has been used extensively in the military past and that any newly assigned meaning will potentially be confused by earlier uses. In spite of these difficulties, it is appropriate to create new definitions when new emphasis is needed and when new conditions are anticipated. (10:23)

So how does the Air Force view operational art in its publications? Probably the simplest answer would be that it is viewed as the application by the warfighting air commander of the principles of war--the broad plan of action and the pattern of employment of the air commander. AFM 1-1 reflects direct agreement with FM 100-5 on the responsibilities of operational art, but does not provide a specific name for this type of activity. In AFM 1-1 the Air Force addresses the activities of a commander engaging in what the Army would call operational art with such statements as:

An air commander adjusts his plan to meet the requirements peculiar to a military action...(4:2-10)

[An air commander is responsible for] orchestrating a coherent and flexible course of action.... (4:2-15)  
...an air commander must continuously assess the operational situation and identify where and when both strategic and tactical actions can be used most productively....Accurate assessments allow an air commander to anticipate, initiate, and redirect efforts. (4:2-14)

The Air Force concept is based on doctrine as the foundation for employing aerospace forces. Taken from the beginning, however, you must address military force as one of the major instruments of national power. AFM 1-1 states:

...the decision to employ US military forces depends on a clear declaration of objectives and the support of the American people. (4:1-1)

National security policy is the broad course of action adopted by the US Government in pursuit of our national security objectives. National policy is implemented through the use of the major instruments of national power: economic, political, psychosocial, technological, and military....The instruments of national power reinforce one another and are used in a coordinated, integrated effort....The use of US Armed Forces, then, is integrated with the other instruments of national power to attain national security objectives. (4:1-2)

Important in these statements is "clear objectives" and a firm understanding that there is more to national power, even in a time of war, than the military. A balance must exist in employing national power; however, it normally follows that if a nation chooses to enter a war, the focus of national power would lie more heavily in the military.

The Air Force has built a foundation for the employment of its force as an instrument of national power through three levels of doctrine. AFM 1-1 defines these as

follows:

Basic doctrine states the most fundamental and enduring beliefs which describe and guide the proper use of aerospace forces in military action. Basic doctrine is the foundation of all aerospace doctrine....AFM 1-1 is the cornerstone doctrinal manual and also provides the framework from which the Air Force develops operational doctrine. (4:v,vi)

Operational doctrine applies the principles of basic doctrine to military actions by describing the proper use of aerospace forces in the context of distinct objectives, force capabilities, broad mission areas, and operational environments. The Air Force publishes operational doctrine in the Air Force 2-series manuals.... (4:vi)

Tactical doctrine applies basic and operational doctrine to military actions by describing the proper use of specific weapon systems to accomplish detailed objectives....Tactical doctrine is published in the Air Force 3- series manuals.... (4:vi)

It is at this doctrinal foundation that the Air Force begins its discussion of the operational level of war. Operational doctrine is that necessary focus for the operational level of war. But doctrine alone does not produce effective leaders. Doctrine provides the guidelines to be used by the leader in developing and implementing his plan of action against a reactive enemy. AFM 1-1 goes on to say:

...a fundamental understanding of aerospace doctrine provides the frame of reference from which the air commander develops his plan of action....But an air commander must apply this doctrine with judgment, and he must tailor his actions to specific situations and objectives.(4:2-1)

An understanding of the aerospace environment, the characteristics and capabilities of aerospace forces, and the principles of war provide the foundation to an air commander's broad plan of employment.(4:2-1,2)

It is the commander's judgment that transforms

doctrine into operational art. The commander must know his forces, his environment and the principles of war to make effective decisions in war. The link between the principles of war and doctrine is further explained in AFM 1-1:

The principles of war represent generally accepted major truths which have been proved successful in the art and science of conducting war. (4:2-4)

...aerospace doctrine flows from these principles and provides mutually accepted and officially sanctioned guidelines to the application of these principles in warfare. (4:2-5)

The commander is the key to achieving the objectives of a war. AFM 1-1 continues:

Success in achieving objectives depends on the knowledge, strategy, and leadership of the commander. The commander must ensure the assigned forces are properly used to attain the objective. (4:2-5)

For aerospace operations, the air commander develops his broad strategy based on the primary objective, mindful of the capabilities of friendly forces (both man and machine), the capabilities and actions of the enemy, the environment, and sound military doctrine. Broad strategies, derived from this combination of factors, form the basis for selecting targets, means of attack, tactics of employment, and the phasing and timing of aerospace attacks. Always, the primary measure of success in employing aerospace forces is achieving the objective through the knowledgeable use of men and their machines. (4:2-5.6)

At the operational level of manuals, Tactical Air Command Manual (TACM) 2-1, Tactical Air Operations, defines the specific focus for developing strategy as follows:

The Theater Command Level determines the overall theater strategy; the Component Level is responsible for the gross tasking and maneuvering of forces to engage the enemy; the Execution and Control Level translates commander's tasking into detailed plans and orders;... (11:3-3)

Where Air Force guidance becomes somewhat confusing is in the area of tactical operations versus strategic operations. With the similarities in the words, it is easy to conclude that strategic operations are at the strategy level and tactical operations are at the tactics level; however, in this context, they both fall at the operational level. The difference lies in the focus of the objectives for each type of action. AFM 1-1 states:

An air commander's broad plan will normally include offensive strategic and tactical actions... (4:2-10)

Strategic actions produce effects and influences which serve the needs of the overall war effort; tactical actions produce direct effects on the field of battle.... Strategic actions normally involve attacks against the vital elements of an enemy's war sustaining capabilities and his will to wage war. Tactical actions are battle-related and normally urgent actions conducted against an enemy's massed or deployed forces, his lines of communication, and his command and control structures used to employ forces. (4:2-11)

Strategic actions involve tactics just as tactical actions do. And the commander's strategy must address both the battles and the war. This strategy must be active, for wars are not static events but rather dynamic conflicts between opponents seeking victory. To be effective against a dynamic enemy, the commander's strategy must attack the enemy's strategy. AFM 1-1 presents it like this:

Attacking an enemy's warfighting potential includes actions against the will of an enemy and actions to deny him the time and space to employ his forces effectively.... an air commander must consider... the air actions that will most clearly deny enemy objectives.... (4:2-13)

...make the enemy react in a predictable manner....



(4.2-14)

An air commander directs, coordinates, and integrates the air effort through control of his assigned forces....Control enables commanders to adjust their plans and use the capabilities of aerospace power to surprise the enemy and disrupt enemy battle plans. (4:4-2)

The Army takes a similar approach to attacking the enemy's strategy. In addressing combat power, FM 100-5 states:

Leaders combine maneuver, firepower, and protection capabilities available to them in countless combinations appropriate to the situation. They also attempt to interfere with the enemy leader's ability to generate the greatest effect against them by interfering with the enemy's ability to effectively maneuver, apply firepower, or provide protection. (3:11)

Again, the commander is the key to developing the strategy to employ against a reactive enemy. The importance of the commander's leadership in the combat power of the unit is described in FM 100-5 as follows:

The most essential element of combat power is competent and confident leadership. Leadership provides purpose, direction, and motivation in combat. (3:13)

The skill and personality of a strong commander represent a significant part of his unit's combat power. (3:14)

It is the commander who orchestrates, provides judgment and intuition, controls and synchronizes his force employment to provide the maximum relative combat power against the enemy at the decisive moment to deny him his objectives. This is the operational level of war. The tasks for the air commander at this level are described as

follows in AFM 1-1:

...central to an air commander's broad plan of action is a coherent and coordinated pattern for employing forces that takes advantage of the inherent flexibility and capabilities of aerospace power....The purpose is to execute coherent, coordinated, and effective aerospace warfare; it is not to establish a predictable routine that can be exploited by an enemy. (4:2-18)

Within a broad plan of action an air commander uses a pattern of employing his forces based on objectives, threats, and opportunities. The pattern of employment represents a continuous process that goes from seeing what needs to be done to actually doing it. Within this pattern, the air commander coordinates and integrates strategic and tactical actions to seize the offensive and protect that initiative. The pattern of employment provides the structure and process for an air commander to conduct effective aerospace warfare. (4:2-18)

An air commander assigns missions and tasks and directs lower echelons to execute operations. This relationship allows the air commander to focus his attentions and energies to the direction of operations towards the overall objective, while subordinate commanders develop tactics and execute specific missions. (4:4-3)

The activities described in both the Air Force's AFM 1-1 and the Army's FM 100-5 for commanders to implement their strategy in war are extremely close. Whether you use the term "operational art" or you address the commander orchestrating his plan of employment, the requirements are the same. The tasks require that the commander know his forces, his environment, his objectives, his doctrine and as much as he can about the enemy's forces and objectives. Then he must apply his judgment and intuition against the "fog and friction of war" to coordinate and integrate the efforts of his forces to effect a decisive victory. The

implementation of his strategy can only be effective if it is a coordinated employment of the total military force--it must make use of the optimum contributions of the air, land and sea components. It is a foundation for this level of warfare that our future leaders must train to.

## CHAPTER III

### JOINT AND COMBINED OPERATIONS

If we are to be effective in warfighting we must make efficient use of our full combat capability. This is not to say that all our forces must be used in every engagement, but rather that we must efficiently use appropriate forces from the different branches of our armed forces to achieve our objectives. General Giulio Douhet in 1921 said the following about joint warfare:

The employment of land, sea, and air forces in time of war should be directed towards one single aim: VICTORY. If maximum effectiveness is to be obtained, these forces operate as components of one single product.... (4:2-1)

AFM 1-1 addresses the joint operations concept as follows:

"The ultimate objective of war is to neutralize or destroy the enemy's armed forces and his will to fight." (4:2-5)

The focus here is not on the enemy's air force alone, but rather his armed forces as a whole. AFM 1-1 further states:

"The air component is employed as an interdependent force with the land and naval components." (4:4-4) The Army equally professes the necessity for joint employment of armed forces in its basic fighting doctrine called AirLand Battle described in FM 100-5. (3:9)

General John Galvin, when he was the commander of the U.S. Army's VII Corps in the Federal Republic of Germany wrote:

We must recognize the absolute requirement for joint-combined operations (12:50)

...the essential meaning of AirLand Battle...is the combined effort of all ground and air forces, directed against the enemy in depth as part of an overall plan that includes deep, close-in, and rear battles. (12:48)

We must ensure a common understanding of AirLand battle concepts. That requires, among other things, a common vocabulary and officers, air and ground, who have studied and trained together. (12:50)

General Galvin brings in the additional dimension of combined operations. Again, this is employment of the total force to achieve the objectives. Colonel John Alger, in his paper discussing joint operational art, makes the point very clear:

It is absurd to think in terms of solely unimational resources at the operational level, for modern states are too interdependent upon the resources, both physical and moral, of allies and friends to allow an activity as serious as war to be undertaken without the involvement of allied and friendly nations. (10:24)

The challenge in conducting effective joint and combined operations is to orchestrate and synchronize the employment of these different forces to produce the greatest combat power against the enemy. Each service and each national force provide unique capabilities that, when properly employed, are capable of inflicting decisive blows on the enemy. However, the reverse is equally true. If these forces are not employed skillfully, unacceptable losses could result with the enemy achieving a significant advantage. It is this orchestration of forces that again brings to the forefront the operational level of war and

operational art.

The theater commander must understand the weapons under his command to build an effective strategy and the component commanders must, as well, understand the total force to be able optimize the contributions of their own components. What is key is that the senior leaders must fully understand the joint and combined systems before they can begin to be creative in their force employment. (9:16) It is this creativity that will enable the commanders to keep the enemy off guard, provide the element of surprise and disrupt his strategy. Knowledge of joint and combined forces, their equipment and doctrine, is, therefore, an essential ingredient in preparing future senior leaders for the operational level of war.

## CHAPTER IV

### CURRENT TRAINING

There currently are a wide variety of training programs to prepare our warfighters for combat. These programs range from the individual tactical skills level to large joint and combined force employment exercises. As has been indicated in the previous chapters, senior combat commanders need strong tactical foundations to be effective in the broader operational level of war and in developing effective strategies for campaign and theater employment. Most of these training programs do contribute to developing that broad tactical experience. However, most also involve force employment against static or "scripted" enemies. This enables efficient achievement of learning objectives but it doesn't lend itself to developing the intuition and judgment a senior commander needs when battling a dynamic opponent.

The basis of much of the training we have today is the concept of training the way you plan to fight. The realism this has brought to not only the exercise programs, but also to the daily unit-level training has gone a long way toward making up for the lack of combat experience of the majority of our tactics-level warfighters.

The realistic training concept came into being while the experiences from Southeast Asia were still fresh

in the minds of our combat veterans. In addition, we still had ready personal access to our Korean War and World War II veterans. The experiences of our combat-tested veterans directly influenced the development of training programs. The programs that were implemented provide stresses to individuals similar to what might be found in combat. They provide realism in the use of equipment, in target or "enemy" fidelity and in battlefield decisions. But they are not an even substitute for actual combat. The rigors of employing against an enemy who is actually firing real weapons with an intent to kill cannot be replicated in a training program.

The true test of combat may not be there, but, as a result of this type of training, the readiness of our untested combat forces has probably never been better. Aircrew training programs like Tactical Air Command's Red Flag and Green Flag exercises conducted on the large Nellis Range Complex and Maple Flag conducted on the large range complex at Canadian Forces Base Cold Lake provide crew members with experiences in dynamic combat tasks with great fidelity. The "enemy" reacts to the aircrews' actions and valuable feedback is provided following the mission as to its success and the effectiveness of the tactics employed. In this type of program, although the aircrew is not tested against real "bullets," he gains something he could not get in real war and that is feedback from the "enemy." Answers



are provided to the questions you learn only from survival during actual combat. Was the tactic effective? Was the skill in maneuvering sufficient to defeat the enemy weapons? Is there a better way? The aircrews leave a training exercise such as this armed with experiences and planning considerations to include important questions to ask while still on the ground and confusion areas to prepare for. In short, we are training at the tactics level better than ever.

At the command and control level we also have made major improvements in the way we train. Commanders and their staffs are able to train in C<sup>3</sup>I structures similar to what they might have in actual war in programs such as Tactical Air Command's Blue Flag exercise and the joint U.S. Air Forces in Europe/U.S. Army, Europe Warrior Preparation Center. Both of these programs rely on a "computer enemy" who is reactive to the strategy and operational art of the commander being trained and his staff. (13:41; 14:41.2) General Galvin had this to say, as the commander of VII Corps, about the Warrior Preparation Center:

The Warrior Preparation Center is a prime example of the kind of training we need in other areas in the future. With the blossoming complexities of joint-combined arms tactics, and with the increased importance of the "operational art"--campaign planning at the corps-level and higher--we need places where we can bring the scattered battlefield counterparts to work out "game plays" that best use their talents and the capabilities of their fighting systems. We must

ensure a common understanding of AirLand Battle concepts. (12:50)

These programs are essential in developing judgment, intuition and "instinct" in our senior combat leaders plus knowledge in the equipment and process for control that they would be using in war. Training while in the job requiring the skills is essential to maintain a sharpened combat edge and to keep abreast of new technology as it is fielded; however, this training must have an earlier foundation beyond tactical experience upon which to build if its real potential is to be achieved.

The Air Force has developed several courses of instruction to provide this foundation. These courses have been instituted at the colonel and general officer level. The Senior Tactical Battle Commander's course, the Crisis Response Management Workshop and the Flag Officer Warfighting Course provide selected senior officers with current equipment capabilities, in particular in the area of electronic combat and C<sup>3</sup>I, plus exposure to the thoughts of previous senior leaders. The flag officer course provides the opportunity to discuss warfare in interactive seminars and to exercise intuition in a computer wargame. (15:5)

In addition to these programs, each of the services has developed courses of study in military history, political science, threat studies and force employment in

its respective professional military education courses. And there is a service-wide focus on professional reading, in particular in the area of military history. This emphasis is most clearly needed in a time when combat experience is waning. But operational art takes more than reading and studying--it requires challenging the mind to make accurate decisions when faced with incomplete information. To develop this skill in operational art requires exercising those needed mental faculties. Lieutenant Colonel Turlington in his paper on learning operational art provides the proper focus in this area:

The danger lies with the operational commander and his staff who are well read but unexperienced in combat. However competent their judgment, their intuition and instincts are untested. They may be easily betrayed into placing too great a value on theory to produce victory (6:12)

The senior service schools conduct exercises involving force employment using computer wargaming which emphasize large force employment strategy. These exercises challenge, to a certain extent, the intuition and instincts of the students. At the Air War College, for example, the Theater Warfare Exercise comes at the end of the academic year and is the culmination of the studies during the year. Students have the opportunity to use doctrine, the principles of war, strategy and operational art during a week-long exercise. The concept of the exercise is excellent and great value can be obtained from the tasks.

In addition, two elective study courses are offered which address current air warfare and theater strategy. As with the Theater Warfare Exercise, these electives are offered during the last portion of the academic year. The concept and timing of the Theater Warfare Exercise is good and the concept for the electives is also good. What is missing, however, in my opinion, is a yearlong emphasis on developing skills for the operational level of war. The Air War College provides the educational foundation for future senior air commanders and the timing of this education fits well in the transition of an officer's focus from the tactical level to the operational level. The benefits derived from an earlier orientation toward building basic skills in intuition and instinct for at least those on a career track that might lead to a senior air commander position would be enormous.

## CHAPTER V

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The operational level of war requires skills and knowledge in greater breadth than at the tactics level and in much more detail than at the strategy level. It is skill at this level which commanders use to engage the enemy's strategy, adjust to his focus, determine his vulnerabilities, then inflict the fatal blow to achieve the objectives of the overall strategy. This skill is oriented to the theater and campaign level and provides opportunities for battles and engagements to contribute to the larger goal of neutralizing or defeating the enemy's armed force. Lieutenant Colonel Holder in his article on training for the operational level describes clearly what is required of officers at this level:

Officers competent at the operational level of war must understand how large enemy forces can be defeated in a theater most economically, speedily, and effectively. They must be able to coordinate ground, air, and naval campaigns with civilian efforts in the pursuit of operationally worthwhile objectives. They must understand the movement, maneuver, employment, support, and intelligence requirements of large forces. And they must be able to weigh the pros and cons of fighting or not fighting at a particular juncture as well as formulating the operational actions that follow a battle and exploit its results. (5:8)

Success at the operational level is not based on following a set formula or checklist, but rather on the ability to act decisively and accurately when faced with

incomplete knowledge of the enemy. The enemy normally will not openly disclose his strategy and objectives; therefore, the operational level commander must use his instincts and intuition to anticipate the enemy's plan and then implement a plan that defeats it. This requires that the commander know his own forces, doctrine and environment plus that of his enemy. And his mind must be trained in "second-guessing" the enemy's plan and shaping or controlling the battlefield to guide the enemy into a position where he can be destroyed. Just as in the benefits that aircrews derive from realistic training programs such as Red Flag, senior commanders who realistically train for the operational level develop that inner sense to ask the right questions, to cut through some of the fog of war, to quickly see the big picture developing and to take note of potential pitfalls. Plus, they learn the need to act decisively and timely rather than delaying action while studying the situation in search of the 100 percent correct course of action. This studying and searching could prove fatal in a dynamic, fast moving conflict.

The current realistic training programs for aircrews provide a solid foundation at the tactics level to include composite force employment of different weapon systems to achieve objectives. They also provide commanders with feedback on the effectiveness of different

weapon systems and tactics against specific types of targets. These programs are not designed to validate tactics, but rather to train with tactics to make aircrews and commanders aware of questions to ask and force employment considerations required to achieve success. This type of training most definitely should be continued, but it doesn't provide the complete answer for the operational level commander. Even the Army's National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, where up to Brigade-level units employ force-on-force against a dynamic simulated enemy maneuver unit, does not fulfill the total requirement for operational level employment. The scale of operational level decision making is larger and considers the employment of all aspects of the combined arms forces in theater strategy.

The C-I exercises such as Blue Flag and the Warrior Preparation Center provide invaluable training for large force commanders and future commanders. Again, training realistically with current systems is essential to effective wartime operation. And the focus on joint-combined operations is the key to success in any conflict. Emphasis in these types of programs should continue to stress outthinking the enemy and fighting at a time and place of the commander's choosing. What is still needed, however, is a strong foundation in operational level thinking prior to reaching the level of commander in

these large-force employment C<sup>3</sup>I exercises.

The professional reading programs such as the Warrior Studies program in the Air Force provide a good basis upon which to develop a foundation for operational level thinking. The service schools all provide emphasis in this area over and above the core curriculum, and this again is essential in developing a solid foundation. But I think it is in the service schools, particularly at the senior level, where the study of operational level warfare can be most effectively expanded to focus more keenly on developing skills in operational art for senior warfighters. The timing in an officer's career for senior service school attendance occurs at a logical point for a shift in focus from the tactics level to the operational level plus the year of academic study provides an ideal forum to think in depth on the subject of theater strategy and operational art.

The core curriculum for the senior service schools provides the breadth in academic studies necessary for professional development to the operational level, but the intensive activity of using this knowledge in exercises to develop the judgment, foresight and intuition necessary to defeat the enemy falls short of, what I consider to be, the necessary goal for warfighting preparation. Because of the breadth in studies and the wide specialties of the students in attendance, a generalist approach is applied to the



curriculum. I feel, however, that the curriculum has provisions for a more indepth study of warfighting and operational art.

Using the Air War College as an example, in addition to the core curriculum, an elective studies program provides a wide variety of additional subject areas from which the students must choose a minimum of three courses. These courses provide the opportunity for students to narrow their focus in a more detailed study of the elective course subjects. The elective studies program is divided up into three terms covering the majority of the school year with three course periods offered each term. Although students are required to take a minimum of three courses, they can elect to take up to nine courses. In general, there is no set sequence of subjects, with several electives being offered in more than one term.

It is in this area of elective studies where the Air War College could increase its focus on warfighting for those officers whose career track could lead to senior level command of a combat organization. These students could "major" in warfighting at the operational level. A "major" studies program such as this could consist of a sequence of three electives covering the three elective terms of the school year. The primary emphasis of these courses would be to develop skills for command at the operational level of war. This course of study does not

need to be limited to students on an operational command career track; however, the depth of discussion and instruction should not be watered down in an attempt to make this course of study more easily understood by students with little or no background in warfighting.

This "major" studies program would have tremendous benefit to the major commands since they would be gaining senior officers with indepth foundations in warfighting at the operational level. The major warfighting commands should be encouraged to contribute in the development of the course of study and in the content of the courses. In addition, the commands should be encouraged to identify officer who should "major" in warfighting. The end goal is to provide the Air Force with future senior leaders who have a strong foundation in operational art.

As a by-product of this course of study, these students would be better prepared and motivated to write papers, theses and publishable articles on theater strategy, operational level thinking and warfighting in general. The subjects for these writings may not necessarily flow from the first couple of weeks of instruction, but easily could flow after several periods of indepth discussion of operational level thinking with other warfighters in the course. Interactive seminars with discussion between other warfighters is key to an indepth and complete study of the operational level of war.

A course of study such as I have proposed should include an indepth study of U.S. military forces, Soviet forces, doctrine, significant historical air operations, current theater plans plus dynamic wargaming exercises to develop the intuition, instincts and judgment of the students. A suggested course flow would be as follows:

- I. First term: Foundation
  - A. Air Force doctrine
  - B. Air Force equipment and systems
  - C. Jointness--Army, Navy and Marine Corps doctrine and equipment
  - D. C<sup>3</sup>I--concept and systems
  - E. Soviet equipment and doctrine
  - F. Computer wargame--entry level emphasizing capabilities of forces, strategy and principles of war, paced for analysis
  - G. Logistics
- II. Second term: Operational Level of War
  - A. Operational doctrine to include AirLand Battle
  - B. Tactics
  - C. Selected historical campaigns from World War II, Korea and Southeast Asia
  - D. Study of recent conflicts such as the Arab-Israeli wars, Falklands, Grenada and Libya
  - E. Field trip to Blue Flag
  - F. Larger scale computer wargame emphasizing strategy and doctrine, paced for analysis
- III. Third term: Theater Strategy and Operational Art
  - A. Current theater strategy in USAFE, PACAF and CENTAF
  - B. JCS exercises
  - C. Airspace management
  - D. NATO doctrine and equipment
  - E. Centers-of-gravity
  - F. Intelligence update
  - G. Future systems and desired impact on air doctrine and theater strategy
  - H. Low-intensity conflict
  - I. Major computer wargame

Throughout the course, thinking should be focused on joint and combined operations. The final wargame should have active Army participation and coordination plus Navy and Marine Corps participation as dictated by the scenario. Consideration should be given to inviting a group of students from the Army War College to participate in this final computer wargame.

Although the Air War College is not the only place we should focus our attention for developing skills in the operational level of warfighting and operational art, it does afford an excellent forum in which to build a solid foundation in our future senior leaders for this level of thinking. Admiral William Crowe, Jr., Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, provides this thought about the war colleges:

...our war colleges...offer the best prospect for filling key voids in professional career patterns--in sum, giving us an officer corps better equipped to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing strategic environment. (16:7)

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

Victory in war cannot be achieved by tactics or strategy alone. Victory will depend on both and the link between them--the operational level of warfare. Performance at this level requires courage and self-confidence. It requires the courage to act on one's intuition and instincts and the self-confidence gained from an indepth knowledge of one's own military capabilities and the forces of the enemy. This courage and self-confidence is reinforced by having previously made timely and accurate decisions at the operational level.

Sun Tzu illustrated the importance of knowing the combatants and in manipulating the enemy's forces in the following statements:

Know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril.

When you are ignorant of the enemy and know yourself; your chances of winning or losing are equal.

If ignorant of the enemy and of yourself, you are certain in every battle to be in peril. (1:84)

...those skilled at making the enemy move do so by creating a situation to which he must conform; they entice him with something he is certain to take, and with lures of ostensible profit they await him in strength. (1:93)

The commander at the operational level must be able to anticipate and predict, focus, orchestrate, and act. And this must be done while experiencing the the fog and

friction of war. To function effectively at this level requires that the commander have a solid foundation in tactics and operational level thinking and then train within the C<sup>3</sup>I system and theater in which he is to operate. It is not a routine task but rather an area for intense thought, study and practice. And the practice must focus beyond studying and reading; it must focus on exercising the mind to develop the intuition, instinct and judgment to act quickly, decisively and accurately in war. This development of the mind can only come from a dynamic exercise against an opponent who is also acting, predicting, adjusting, and attempting to achieve victory. The operational commander must be prepared and able to take risks to achieve the goals of his strategy, for in war his information will be incomplete and his time will be short. Exercising and focusing on the operational level of warfare against a dynamic enemy is the difference between just studying warfare and preparing for war.

The realistic training programs from the unit level to large-scale exercises such as Red Flag and the National Training Center provide a solid foundation at the tactics level for future senior commanders. The C<sup>3</sup>I exercises provide excellent training for controlling the war and, where they are linked to a dynamic "enemy" force, they provide excellent training in operational art. And the senior service schools are providing a foundation in the

study of warfare. But the foundation for developing the mind to think at the operational level must be included. The senior service schools offer the best forum in which to focus attention on developing the skills for the operational level of war. In short, the focus should be on warfighters "majoring" in warfighting.

With the combat experience of our military forces diminishing and the ever-present potential for conflict against an enemy force superior in numbers, our future military leaders must be prepared to take command of the battlefield. They must be trained to think at the operational level. They must be able to anticipate and forecast, to quickly adjust the strategy when it is no longer working, to tie battles to the theater strategy and to act decisively. The consequences of any less preparation are unacceptable.

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